procure new aircraft for VVIPs and other dignitaries. The cost and other details would be known only after finalisation of negotiations with the vendor.

Indo-British cooperation in civil aviation sector

†3262. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Britain propose to co-operate in civil aviation sector;

(b) if so, the details of such plan; and

(c) the steps taken in this regard so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) to (c) As per the existing co-operation in civil aviation sector between India and Britain, Air India is operating 11 services per week, British Airways is operating 18 services per week and Virgin Atlantic is operating 3 services per week in India-Britain sector. However, Bilateral air services talks between the two countries is held from time to time to review the air services matters.

FDI in airports

3263. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that no proposals for Foreign Direct Investment in airports have been received although Government have repeatedly emphasized that it would allow 74 per cent of FDI in airports and even 100 per cent.in green field ventures;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that under the Airports Authority Act the AAI is the only body authorised to build and operate airports and, therefor, prospective investors are reluctant to commit their investments without the enabling legal provisions; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken to remove such disabilities to encourage inflow investments?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE,MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPADYESSO NAIK): (a) At least two proposals for FDI through equity participation have been approved in respect of setting up of greenfield airports under joint venture at Devanahalli near Bangalore and Shamshabad near Hyderabad, respectively. The consortium led by Siemens, Germany, which has been selected for Bangalore International Airport project, shall contribute in the equity to the extent of 74%. Similarly, GMR Infrastructure Limited, selected as preferred bidder for Hyderabad International Airport project, shall hold 74% equity.

(b) Does not arise in view of the above.

(c) Airports Authority of India (AAI) 1994 empowers AAI to deve'op, maintain and operate all the airports, other than airports and airfields belonging to, or subject to the control of, Armed Force of the Union. The prospective investors for the greenfield airports also have sought amendments to AAI Act 1994 to remove the greenfield airports from the ambit of the Act.

(d) Steps are being undertaken to introduce the bill to amend the AAI Act in the Parliament.

Direct Air Service between Delhi and Patna

†3264. PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the route of Mumbai-Delhi-Patna flight No. IC 809 is diverted *via* Ranchi during summer which takes three hours time for the journey from Delhi to Patna while it takes one hour and twenty minutes in a direct flight;

(b) whether passengers, specially of 'J' class conveniently travel in other Airlines to save the time;

(c) the average decrease in number of passengers travelling to Patna *via* Ranchi *vis-a-vis* direct flight to Patna; and

(d) the action being taken by Government for operating direct flight to Patna keeping in view the convenience of passengers and saving of their time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK) : (a) to (d) Indian Airlines operates a

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.